

# Community Traditions

Seven large Tolowa hamlets once stood between here and the Smith River to the north. One of the largest, *Shinyatlchi* (“in summer where they dry surf fish”), was on the banks of nearby Nickel Creek, where the villagers had commanding views of the ocean, their main source of sustenance.

Today there are many Tolowa who live on rancherias at Smith River and Elk Valley. Each fall, Tolowas gather for ceremonial dances such as the *Naydosh* (“Feather Dance”), giving thanks for the harvest and for renewing the Earth Mother.

Tolowa canoe builders carved large seagoing canoes for hunting highly prized sea lions, while others caught surf fish along the shore, gathered shellfish in the rocks, and fished for salmon in the rivers.



Drying surf fish on  
Crescent Beach.